



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

MAGILLIGAN PRISON

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MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the quality of prison life, by working to ensure fairness and accountability in prison.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Members of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for Magilligan Prison who have served more than 3 years were appointed by the Justice Minister under Section 10 of the Prison Act (NI) 1953. New members to the Board were appointed by the Permanent Secretary to the Department of Justice.

The Board is required to:

- visit Magilligan regularly and report to Justice Minister on the conditions of imprisonment and the treatment of offenders.
- consider requests and complaints made by prisoners to the Board.
- report matters of concern to the Governor or, in serious cases, the Justice Minister; and
- Exercise certain powers that are given to the Prison and Young Offenders Rules (NI) 2005.

The Prison Rules further require the Board to satisfy itself as to:

- the treatment of prisoners including provision for their healthcare and other welfare while in prison.
- the facilities available to prisoners to allow them to make purposeful use of their time; and
- The cleanliness and adequacy of prison premises.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have free access at any time to all prisoners and to all parts of the prison to which they are appointed. In exercising their rights under the Prison Rules, members shall take into consideration the matters referred to in Rule 124 (5) which state, in the exercise of any of its powers, the Board will not:

- undermine the security and good order of the prison.
- prejudice the efficient operation of the prison; or

- prevent the proper treatment of prisoners.

The Board shall also have reasonable access to any of the records of the prison, with the exception of medical records and matters of national security.

UK National Preventive Mechanism

The IMB is part of the United Kingdom National Preventive Mechanism (UK NPM) as required by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION 2024/25

As the Chairperson of Magilligan IMB, I am pleased to present the Annual Report which will outline our observations for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. For the purposes of this report the Independent Monitoring Report shall be referred to as the IMB and "the Board" shall refer to those members of the Magilligan Board.

We regret the death of one inmate during the reporting year and offer our sympathy to his family and friends.

The Board which consists of six members has, to its credit, visited the prison on approximately 250 occasions to monitor conditions of detention, and the treatment and welfare of the 486 offenders there, including their healthcare.

In the course of the reporting year, we held monthly meetings during which the Governor presented a detailed report, addressed any concerns we had, and answered our often very-many questions. I wish to thank Governor Milling, and Governor Platt who, on occasion represented him at our meetings, for their open-door policy, willingness to listen and clarify any outstanding matters which we may have, and I acknowledge, on behalf of the Board, the dedication of their staff who display, for the most part, the ability to act in a professional manner, treat the men in their care fairly and a willingness to forge strong relationships with them, which in turn contributes greatly to the evident generally settled atmosphere within Magilligan.

I cannot conclude my report without expressing disbelief that all areas within HMP Magilligan survived Storm Eowyn a few short months ago, especially the unit which houses the prison kitchen. It is of the utmost importance that the new build commences as soon as possible. As expressed previously on many occasions, the general condition of the entire prison estate needs urgent attention. The buildings are in a very poor state of repair, and the men who live there, the staff who work there and the many visitors including ourselves who pass through Magilligan on a regular basis, deserve so much better. For too long Magilligan Prison could only be described as the poor relation on the North Coast, and this situation need to be addressed as a matter of priority.

In closing, I wish to thank my fellow Board members for their commitment and dedication to the role, and for the giving of their time, and also I want to acknowledge the help and support offered to us by the IMB Secretariat and the Sponsor body in Department of Justice. We welcome the new staff members and offer best wishes to those who have gone before them during this reporting year.

Margaret McCrory

Chair of Magilligan IMB

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FORWARD

The Executive Council (EC) for the Independent Monitoring Boards in Northern Ireland provides strategic direction and guidance for the IMB Boards at HMP Maghaberry, HMP Magilligan and HMP Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison. The Executive Council is made up of 3 representatives from each of the IMB Boards, the Board elect a Chair and Vice Chair, and it has its own constitution.

The EC meets a minimum of 4 times per year and also meets quarterly with the Director General of Prisons, The Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) and other relevant stakeholders.

The EC report to the Justice Minister and this year were also called before the Justice Select Committee at Stormont. The EC were questioned by the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) about conditions and treatment of all prisoners within the 3 prison establishments, there was a particular emphasis on the introduction of new technology and its processes. I would like to thank Patsy McGonigle and Yvonne Adair for their attendance and participation at this meeting.

The EC, in committee, have discussed the introduction of new technology such as x-ray body scanners and the associated policies and procedures. Whilst we have challenged some aspects of the procedures, we believe they are a vital tool in helping to reduce the illicit trafficking of items within the 3 prisons. Northern Ireland Prison Service commissioned an independent report into the introduction of the x-ray body scanners, but to date the EC have not had sight of that report and we await it being shared with us.

The IMB is a member of the National Preventative Mechanism (NPM), which was established in 2009 after the United Kingdom ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of those held in custody (OPCAT) in December 2003. The NPM is made up from 21 statutory bodies that independently monitor places of detention across the UK. The EC send representatives to national events and the annual conference, which allows for important networking to take place. The NPM have nationally developed meaningful work on issues such as the needs of women held in custody, the needs of an aging prison population, drug usage, rehabilitation etc., and later in the year

they hope to launch a database to assist in identifying trends across the UK. The work at a national and international level of the NPM administration should be commended.

At a local level Northern Ireland now has a NPM sub-committee, which has met on several occasions, and it is providing extremely good support and guidance for all stakeholders.

Across prison establishments in Northern Ireland, the increase in numbers, age profile, mental health and addiction issues are placing significant strain on the prison service and health care providers. The EC welcomed the increased investment by the Minister in an attempt to improve this situation but we recognise that this funding needs to be replicated within healthcare.

The EC has also been involved in the national post covid enquiry and have provided information about their monitoring during that period of time.

As the EC Chair I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to each of the EC Board members for their dedication and time, which goes above and beyond what is expected of a group of volunteers.

John Denvir

Executive Council Chair

OVERVIEW OF MAGILLIGAN PRISON

Magilligan is a medium to low security prison which, as of 31 March 2025, held a total of 486 adult male sentenced prisoners on transfer from Maghaberry – all of whom are Category B or lower. Although most are serving 6 years or less, there are a small number of life sentenced prisoners.

The focus of the prison is on pre-release preparation, risk management and resettlement in the community on release. Its regime promotes responsibility and trust, addresses offending behaviour and emphasises social inclusion, employability and strengthening family relationships. As prisoners progress, they are given increased freedom to move around the prison and experience decreasing supervision and control.

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust) is commissioned to provide primary, mental health and addictions services.

Start 360 is commissioned by the Trust to deliver the AD:EPT (Alcohol and Drugs: Empowering People through Therapy) programme and some therapeutic interventions.

Education and Training is provided by Belfast Metropolitan College and delivered by the North West Regional College (NWRC), under a service level agreement, and library services by NI Libraries.

Chaplaincy Services are provided by the various churches, further spiritual help by the Prison Fellowship.

There are a variety of voluntary and charitable organisations within the prison. NIACRO supports families and is based in the Visitors Centre. Housing Rights staff provide guidance with grants, accommodation and benefits. CRUSE Bereavement Care and Barnardos' support prisoners with family issues. The Samaritans Listener scheme is well embedded at Magilligan.

ACCOMMODATION

The prisoner accommodation consists of:

Halward House – the most modern accommodation on the prison estate where prisoners from Maghaberry are housed initially. Standing as a two-storey unit it can house 84 prisoners if cells are doubled. Each floor allows for communal dining, recreation and association.

H1

A Wing- General population

B Wing – Safer Custody landing for prisoners needing extra support

C&D Wings - General population.

H2

A&B Wings - Older prisoners - many of whom have complex needs.

C&D Wings - Vulnerable prisoners

H3

All Wings - General population.

Alpha

A low supervision modular building with 50 rooms which houses prisoners who are being assessed for Foyleview working-out unit.

Foyleview

Low security unit situated outside the wall of the main prison and consisting of an administration building and two modular terrapins. There is a communal dining/cooking/ recreation area.

Runkerry

A relatively new modern 4-bed unit situated near to Foyleview which accommodates prisoners nearing the end of their sentence.

EDUCATION LEARNING AND SKILLS

Belfast Metropolitan College (THE MET) is the lead provider of learning and skills within Magilligan prison. Courses are delivered in partnership with the North West Regional College (NWRC) which has an objective to provide a range of accredited courses such as Art, Barbering, various Construction Skills including Bricklaying, Carpentry, Joinery, Painting and Decorating, Plastering, Tiling, Creative Writing, Employability, Literacy and Numeracy Essential Skills, ESOL, Food Safety, Horticulture, IT and Welding.

In conjunction with NWRC a significant number of vocational courses are provided by NIPS.

There were 440 unique individuals enrolled onto at least one course (SLA target is 324)

On average 25% of the inmate population engage directly with NWRC learning and skills.

NWRC staff retention seems to have improved. A SEN coordinator and an additional literacy tutor have recently been recruited, and there is currently a vacancy for a numeracy tutor.

Staff sick absence is infrequent, but classes are cancelled if an individual tutor is off. There is no staff budget within the SLA terms of providing cover or annual leave.

New courses have been introduced:

Level 2 award in Barista skills,

Level 2 award /certificate in construction (replacing 4 of our level 1 courses)

Four L 3 qualifications are currently offered:

Level 3- Cutting Men's Hair,

Level 3- Certificate in Barbering,

Level 3- award in Information Technology Applications,

Level 3- Certificate in Horticulture.

As stated in previous reports, the lack of investment in facilities throughout Magilligan Prison including education continues to impact the facilities there. The buildings are dilapidated, few in number in terms of suitability, and not fit for purpose in that numbers are limited within them. Due to the location of the prison, the broadband/Wi-Fi is not without its challenges either.

We are disappointed to note that at the time of this report, and after seventeen months, the gas system in the welding workshop is still not operational. The ongoing issues have resulted in much time and money being wasted, along with the great need for good welders being disregarded. Great potential has been shown by many of the prisoners who have shown a keen interest in the course and have been unable to continue or finish the courses they started pre-November 2023. This ridiculous situation has been ongoing for far too long at this stage, although we would like to think that the whispers of current 'repairs' result in a positive and lasting outcome.

We are pleased to note that the barista course which had been approved has finally commenced.

Observations

- Substantial investment is required to provide new facilities to allow for a better delivery of education within Magilligan prison.
- As stated in previous reports, the needs of prisoners who cannot read or write must be addressed.
- As stated in last year's report, the issues in gas system in the welding workshop must be reviewed by an independent body.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Oversight of the equality agenda lies with the Equality and Diversity committee which formally monitors the prison's compliance with its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Chaired by the Deputy Governor, a monthly meeting examines statistical data covering the areas of adjudications, complaints, control and restraint, drug tests, PREPS, UTRs, CTRs, searches, work allocation, and

segregation. The Northern Ireland Equality Commission is represented and a member of the Board attends as an observer.

The Criminal Justice Inspection of 2023 recommended that the scope of consultation with prisoners should be expanded and that prisoner perceptions of staff victimisation should be addressed. To this end the format of the meetings was revised and representatives of the house Prisoner forums are invited to attend the meeting, on rotation, to raise concerns with the committee. This input is valuable, but the issues brought forward are wide ranging and if unrelated to Section 75. are reassigned appropriately. It was intended that prisoners invited to attend the meeting would remain throughout and, instead of circulating a full set of printed statistical information, the data is displayed digitally on screen with some redactions. However, in effect, the forums have preferred to complete a written submission of any concerns they wish to raise which has limited their engagement with the committee. The Board has suggested in previous reports that some incentive be offered to encourage prisoners to become representatives and provide input to the meeting.

A continuous Action Plan provides an overview of progress against recommendations. The monitoring data is presented in a format which enables disparities to be clearly identified with a focus on indicating any poorer outcomes for either of the two main religious groups. Any anomalies are further examined by taking a 10% dip sample. Key performance measures relating to other protected groups are analysed under the headings of Religion, Race and Age but copies of this report are circulated with the post meeting minutes and are not discussed. The Board repeats its suggestion that this be rectified as the provision and consideration of this data would strengthen the work of the committee and increase its inclusivity.

There is a thorough analysis of complaints and detailed comparisons are made month to month. Frequently complaints are found to have been wrongly categorised and are, in fact, requests. Despite the introduction of a revised protocol there has been little progress concerning the management of property and cash which continually engenders the largest number of complaints. The majority result either from items lost in transit or delays in prisoners receiving items sent to them. This causes a great deal of frustration and unhappiness and indicates that the process for dealing with property is still flawed and requires further review.

Whilst a small number of individual prisoners account for multiple complaints, often escalating them despite a resolution having been offered at an early stage. All complaints concerning discrimination, harassment or victimisation are taken seriously and investigated. Although no conclusive evidence has been found to support reports of overt staff victimisation prisoners have informed the Board of instances where they have felt that they have been treated unfairly by specific Officers. The Deputy Governor reviews every complaint made against staff and follows the agreed process, however the Board remains concerned as to the independence and rigour of staff investigations and again calls for this to be rectified.

Also there have been complaints regarding verbal abuse which is both unprofessional and damaging. There is still a tendency for prisoners to be called by an Officer shouting their name down the wing. Not only is this disrespectful it also destroys the confidentiality of a meeting with the IMB and is not in line with Magilligan's guidance to Officers as to how individuals should be addressed.

The allocation of work roles requires that a balance of religion be maintained as far as possible. A diagram showing how work is allocated has been a useful addition to explaining the process although there are waiting lists for the majority of roles. Religious affiliation plays no part in selecting individuals for jobs although residential staff are requested to be aware of the breakdown of the religion of orderlies on the landings, taking into consideration the overall composition of the house. It is pleasing to report the high percentage of prisoners who are Enhanced and how few are on a Basic regime. Applications for Resettlement Leave, CTRs and ATRs are examined closely to ensure that there is no unintentional bias in relation to decisions made especially with regard to areas that may be problematic for accompanying staff.

The Board is pleased to report the continuation of the excellent work with foreign national prisoners undertaken by the co-ordinating officer. At the end of the period under review there were 20 Foreign National prisoners from 10 countries. The Officer shows a good understanding of their needs and the support each one requires. To date they have integrated well into the general population undoubtedly helped by the availability of Flash Cards in each of the languages spoken which enables them to request items they require, make contact with fellow prisoners and become involved in the daily regime.

The Board intervened in the case of a prisoner who spoke no English and who had been transferred from Maghaberry to Magilligan where there was no other prisoner who spoke his language. The prisoner was very isolated and depressed but a request to swap him with a foreign national from Maghaberry who could speak with prisoners in Magilligan took a lengthy time to be instigated. The IMB invoked the potential violation of the prisoner's human rights to implement the required move.

Translation services, formerly provided by the Big Word have been replaced by Language Line which, since each residential area has its own unique code, makes monthly usage reports more transparent. Tablets used for translation have been problematic but there is one to each house currently. The Board would like to see training in the use of Language Line undertaken throughout the prison. The committee is kept informed of new committals and releases and is made aware of the level of English language competence. Where necessary ESOL classes are offered and the majority of prisoners are engaged in work. Home Office Immigration surgeries take place in the PDU and there are frequent immigration visits. This regular contact keeps prisoners informed of the status of their date for deportation or application for settlement which alleviates much of the anxiety generated by uncertainty regarding their progression.

An advocate for the Travelling Community working across the three establishments was welcomed to the committee. However, Travellers in Magilligan felt let down as they had expected that he would be more on site than was actually the case. It was conveyed to the committee that they would prefer to have a member of NIPS staff designated to deal with their concerns. This situation has now been resolved and the Board is pleased to report that the Traveller's advocate is now regularly in the prison. A Veterans group has been established and meets regularly. Residents of Foyleview are seen individually as their release dates are imminent and support is offered both immediately and for 6 months post release. There has been a recent request from members of the LGBTQIA community for the provision of a quiet meeting space. External advice as to how best to create this has been sought from Rainbow.

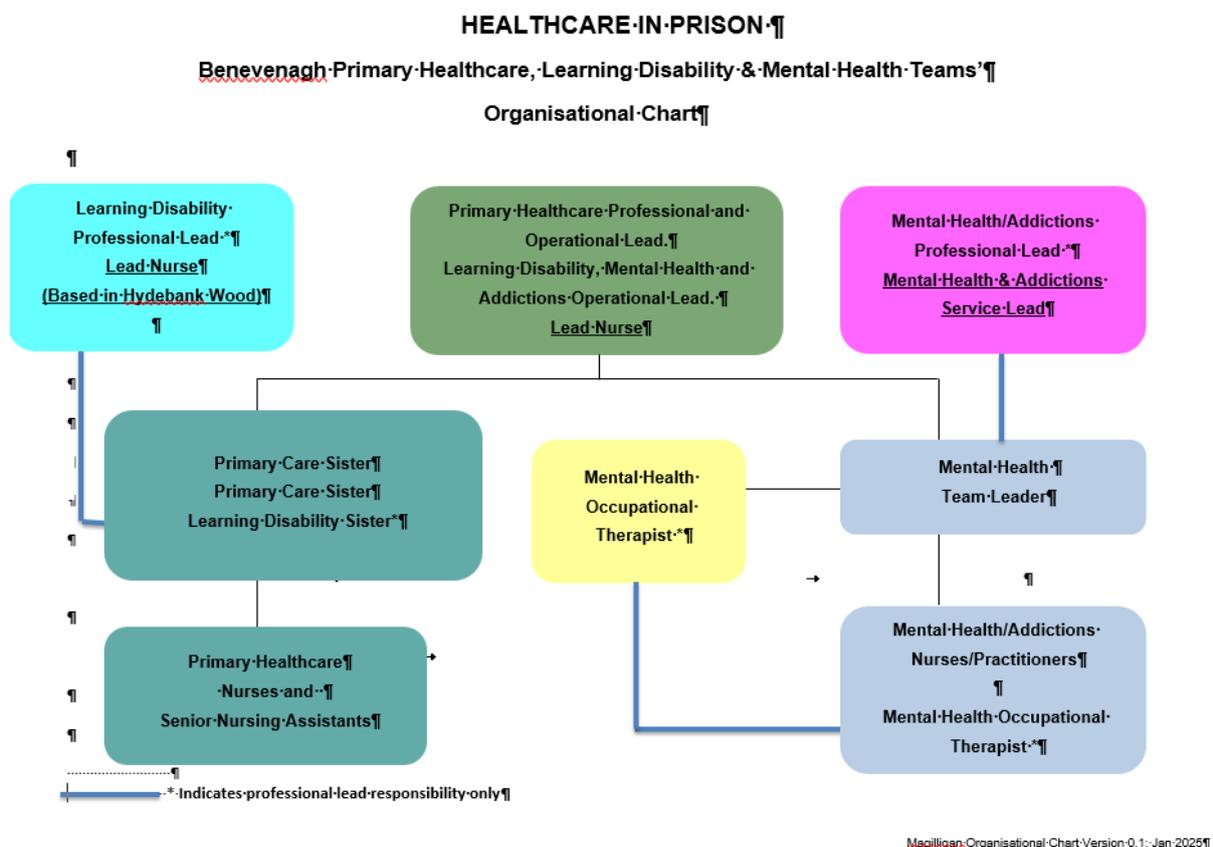
The Equality and Diversity committee generates a large amount of data and the Board once again would suggest that more longitudinal analysis and identification of trends be undertaken.

Monitoring Observations

- The Board repeats its previous suggestion that some incentive is offered to encourage prisoner representation at committee meetings.
- Copies of Key Performance Indicators are made available at committee meetings.
- Review the protocol for dealing with property and cash.
- There is a requirement for the introduction of a robust strategy for investigating accusations of staff victimisation.
- The Board applauds the excellent work undertaken with Foreign National prisoners.
- There should be more longitudinal analysis of data.

HEALTHCARE INCORPORATING PRIMARY CARE, MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

The normal regime of the prisoners was maintained throughout the year. Healthcare services, which includes primary care, mental health and dental and optical services, are provided by the South East Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT). People in custody in HMP Magilligan should be afforded the same standard of care in prison as they would have received in the community.



A member of Health care staff attends the IMB monthly meetings by open invitation as operational pressures allow. To monitor the service provided to prisoners, it would be beneficial to have regular written reporting of key metrics such as prisoner attendances, waiting lists and waiting times for the various health services. The IMB is disappointed that this information has never been provided despite a judicial review that supported the position that healthcare provision in prison is not of the same standard as that in the community. This information was also requested from

the Assistant Director for Healthcare in Prison in February 2025, but we have not yet received a response.

GP waiting time improved to approximately 6 weeks by the end of the year which is an improvement from a low of 14 weeks last year.

Dental service has increased to 6 sessions with urgent appointments being seen first. Routine appointments can wait up to 12 weeks.

The IMB has concerns about pharmacy arrangements, which, being based at Maghaberry, can lead to delays in fulfilling prescriptions and ensuring they arrive in a timely manner to Magilligan. There has been a reduction in prescribing pregabalin and gabapentin as per guidelines, and this has been communicated to prisoners.

Approximately 45 patients are on the Opiate Substitute Therapy programme in Magilligan at the end of this reporting period.

Nurse-led sessions are available daily and nurses attend anyone held in CSU. Paramedics are used to supplement medical cover at night.

The main issue with health provision continues to be staff shortages and long-standing underfunding. Health provision must be fully resourced in funding and staffing if it is to deliver healthcare to the expected standard.

Prisoners are impacted by experiencing reduced access to services. There are long waiting times to see a doctor and other services. Of most concern is access to mental health and addictions support. Delays in this can affect a prisoner's eligibility for work and release opportunities as well as impacting negatively on their continuing healthcare after release.

Common issues raised by prisoners are:

- Prescriptions from the community not being continued when admitted to prison.
- Delays in prescription being fulfilled in Magilligan after transfer from Maghaberry and, as a result the issue cannot be addressed without a doctor's appointment, which is subject to delay, as stated above.
- Convoluted access to social care and this does not fall under Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

- Missed hospital appointments due to communication issues or NIPS staff shortages.

The system described in last year's report with prompt informal resolution of health complaints has ceased and now complaints are processed more formally. Last year a part-time Engagement Lead was appointed whose role included taking receipt of all Healthcare related complaints. This function has not continued, and complaints now go to the relevant lead for the service for a response. The previous arrangement worked well and made an appreciable difference to prisoner's wellbeing since they felt there was someone listening to their concerns and doing their best to help them.

We note that on occasions prisoners still miss hospital appointments due to the unavailability of prison transport. Attendance at court, for example, was given priority. Sometimes little or no notice was given, and the appointment was lost which is distressing for the prisoner.

Monitoring Observations

- 1 Healthcare should provide regular reports of key metrics, to include usage of services, waiting list numbers and waiting times for services.
- 2 Healthcare staff vacancies should be filled as soon as possible.
- 3 Summary of complaints should be presented in the Healthcare report.
- 4 Number of external appointments missed due to transport issues should be reported.

SAFER CUSTODY

Security within the prison is good. Inspections have noted a safe and respectful environment with good relations between staff and prisoners. The Board's view of safety is formed from observations taken from its own monitoring, review of data, including, on occasion, CCTV footage, attendance at meetings and speaking with staff and service providers.

The Safer Custody Forum is the formal means by which the management of vulnerable individuals, incidences of self-harm, bullying and poor mental health is monitored. Monthly meetings are Chaired by the Residential Governor and attended by the Safety and Support team, Senior Officers, representatives of Healthcare and the Prisoner Development Unit. A member of the IMB attends as an observer.

The Board, in its 2020-2021 report commented on the strengthening of Safer Custody across the prison as a result of establishing a specific Safety and Support team. The team is located in designated offices in Halward House and has access to an electronic care management system which helps staff to raise a concern, assess an individual's risk of self-harm and meet the needs of prisoners in distress. Reports are produced for monthly safety meetings and all stakeholders are involved in the review process.

Where there are concerns that a prisoner is distressed or in a personal crisis the Supporting Prisoners At Risk (SPAR) Evo process can be invoked. Following triage and risk assessment an individual care plan and monitoring is put in place. Every concern raised is formally assessed and is assigned one of three outcomes: No apparent risk; no apparent risk with other action or referral; or at risk. 78 individuals were assessed as being at risk during the period covered by this report.

Often a petition of concern followed by a number of meaningful conversations or referral to another agency such as CRUSE, AD:EPT, or Mental Health provide an individualised approach which negates the need to move the prisoner from his landing. Where the prisoner is assessed as being at risk of serious self-harm or states that they cannot keep themselves safe then a move to a safer cell may be initiated.

Recently some concern has been expressed that, compared with Maghaberry, there has been an over use of safer cell and anti-ligature clothing. Decisions regarding both are at the discretion of the Duty Governor who, at that juncture, may have to consider the prison's duty of care and adopt a protective strategy rather than being proactive in addressing the underlying issues.

The Board is pleased to be able to report that a review of SPAR Evo is being undertaken and has asked to be included in the subsequent staff training. Members

have also requested that they be notified of multi-agency review meetings. To date notification has been haphazard and the Board requests that this be rectified.

Documentation of actions taken has been greatly improved enabling Board members to identify trends and patterns of behaviour. Detailed audits generate alerts so that management checks can be made to ensure that they have been completed on time and advice and support has been given to staff with reference to the quality of recording.

Muti-agency review/check ins meetings for prisoners managed under Safer Custody enable an individual's issues to be addressed. An average of 22 prisoners are on the case load at any time, each is discussed and a personal development plan agreed. The prisoner is generally involved in this process with the aim of a return to the general population.

Following the introduction of the X-ray Body Scanner there has been a significant reduction in the entry of illicit substances into the prison with some increase in the diversion of prescribed medication on the landings. The majority of prisoners receive their medication for self-administration which is a sensible step in preparation for release. However, it leads to increased access to prescription drugs despite staff making frequent checks on the locked boxes in each cell. In addition, new forms of "currency" have emerged. There is a market for expensive designer trainers and sweatshirts, which further adds to the complaints regarding "lost" clothes and other possessions.

The Challenging Anti-Social Behaviour, (CAB), strategy is based on recording evidence by raising a concern, incident, or victim form. While in the period covered by this report only 22 cases of Prisoner-on-Prisoner assaults were recorded. However, the Board is aware that prisoners may be unwilling to report perpetrators and are informed of instances of bullying and threatening behaviour which they are able to bring to the attention of staff who, in turn, are often able to challenge the individuals responsible.

Prisoners who have been on temporary release and the weekly cohort of transfers from Maghaberry are scanned for the presence of contraband on their arrival at Magilligan. The majority of these scans are interpreted as negative but if positive the

prisoner will be asked if he wishes to surrender the item(s) shown and, if he declares that he has nothing to give up he is placed on a Rule 32 and accommodated in the CSU for his own safety. Subsequently he will be rescanned and if the result is negative, he will be discharged to the House to which he has been assigned. If positive, or inconclusive, he will be held in the CSU and re-scanned until a negative interpretation is reached.

Whilst the Board realises that the interpretation of scans is not definitive and can be incorrect, there is a concern regarding the whereabouts of any substance where a prisoner has initially tested positive but on rescanning is negative. Prison management is primarily concerned with the prevention of illicit substances entering the prison but the possible disposal of items does not warrant further investigation.

Use of force remains infrequent, with few incidents recorded. When force is used it is often low-level restraint and each incident is reviewed at regular meetings attended by a Board member. The Board is satisfied that the use of force events are appropriately justified and reported. Staff assaults are also rare but the use of body worn cameras remains inconsistent other than in the CSU. There are occasions where they could provide definitive evidence and, once again, the Board calls for their use to be made compulsory.

The Listener Scheme continues to be most successful. Training by the Samaritans is ongoing and, in time, their role will be extended to include some mentoring. All new Transfers from Maghaberry are met on arrival and help available is promoted to them. An introductory talk is given on the following morning and prisoners are told how to contact a Listener.

It is disappointing that during the period being reviewed there were two instances of prisoners absconding while on temporary release. Whilst one was quickly apprehended the other remains at large. While the Parole Commissioners consider a period of pre-release testing to be essential the Board would question the efficacy of the risk assessment employed prior to their release.

It is the Board's view that, overall, the prison is a safe place to be. The safety culture is one of continuous improvement with the analysis of information gathered by the

Safer Custody team, together with well embedded processes which ensure a regime that adapts well to emerging issues.

Monitoring Observations

- Ensure that Board members are informed consistently of all prisoners placed on a SPAR and are notified of multi-agency review meetings.
- Attention is paid to developing more effective strategies to deal with anti-social behaviour.
- The wearing of body worn cameras is made compulsory for all staff.
- Prior to being granted a period of temporary release prisoners undergo a through risk assessment.

SEGREGATION - CARE AND SUPERVISION UNIT (CSU)

Segregation, the restriction of association, may be used as a deterrent for a number of offences generally those categorised under Prison Rule 32 pertaining to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the prison or to safeguard the prisoner's personal safety. Cellular Confinement (CC) may also be awarded through the adjudication process for a variety of reasons including, possession of unauthorised items, disobeying an order and damaging prison property. Members of the Board visit the CSU at least once a week and have a statutory obligation to ensure that, where a prisoner is detained under Rule 32 the procedure has been undertaken correctly.

The majority of documentation is generated digitally which makes it more difficult for IMB members to check. The Board requires training to become familiar with the forms, aware of how they are to be completed correctly and provision of a device to access the information.

Members of the IMB must be informed when a prisoner is placed on a Rule 32 and are statutorily obliged to attend case reviews where an application for an extension to the period of segregation is sought. There is a protocol for contacting Board

members but the introduction of the X-ray body scanner has prompted a change to this and notification now tends to be by the member on rota contacting the CSU to ascertain whether they are required. This is by no means a satisfactory procedure. Reviews are often cancelled, the time of reviews changed at short notice and when members arrive there are delays in starting the meeting. The Board requests that there should be a thorough examination of the involvement of members in the procedure in order to arrive at an efficient solution. Despite the IMB having so few members attendance at Rule 32 case reviews and oversight meetings have been prioritised with very few missed.

On occasion prisoners are placed on a Rule 32 for their own safety and/or the safety of others. In instances where an individual has enemies throughout the prison it is not possible to accommodate him anywhere other than the CSU. There are also individuals whose complex mental health needs result in behaviours which mean that they cannot be placed in the general prison population and who may remain in the CSU for long periods awaiting transference for assessment and treatment outside of the prison under Article 53 of the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986. The Board continues to express its concern regarding this situation which has pertained for a considerable length of time.

It should be noted that the CSU is a place where individualised care can be administered but segregation is not conducive to good mental health and a concerted effort is made to ensure that no prisoner remains on it for any longer than is strictly necessary.

When visiting prisoners in the CSU Board members are able to speak freely with them. Generally, officers are in the vicinity but are not privy to any conversations. A private interview room is available but is at some distance from the main building and at times a security issue would prevent it from being used. The CSU building is not fit for purpose despite continuous refurbishment and decoration. To combat a series of cell wrecks anti vandal sanitary ware has been fitted in one cell. As near as possible a normal regime is followed. All prisoners receive a shower and phone call and some time outside, either in the yard or, if the weather permits, in the Therapy Garden. There are a variety of distraction packs, books and DVDs. On arrival at the CSU healthcare, the PDU and education are notified of the prisoner's location. This

enables education and Personal Development Plans to be continued. There have been criticisms concerning the lack of meaningful communication but conversations and time out of cell are now recorded electronically and can be verified.

Anyone placed on a Rule 32 should have an exit plan in place from the inception of their being placed in it. The longest time any prisoner spent in the CSU during the year under review was 213 days. Such a concerted length of time was unusual for Magilligan CSU and was occasioned by the prisoner's complex needs, unpredictable, violent and abusive behaviour, several cell wrecks and a number of dirty protests. Throughout this time the staff showed total professionalism in managing him and made several efforts to produce a sustainable exit strategy.

Board members have attended multi-disciplinary Oversight meetings at which any further support is identified and exit strategies are considered. Chaired by the Deputy Governor representatives of Healthcare, mental health and education/activities are invited to attend or supply written documentation. In effect written documentation has become the means by which information is provided and the Board is of the opinion that representatives should attend in person at least once a month in order for decisions regarding exit strategies to be discussed.

During monitoring visits staff-prisoner relationships have been observed to be mostly positive and respectful. A survey of prisoner experiences is conducted and there are few complaints of any prisoner receiving a negative experience. Ensuring consistency of staffing and establishing a strong team helps to provide continuity and, given that prisoners accommodated in the CSU are extremely challenging and staff are exposed to sustained periods of verbal abuse and disruptive behaviour, they are to be complimented on their professionalism in managing the men in their care.

Monitoring Observations

- The procedure for notifying Board members of their required attendance at Rule 32 reviews is re-examined.
- Board members are furnished with the means to view Rule 32 documentation presented in digital format.
- The CSU building requires replacement.

- Representatives of Healthcare, mental health and education/activities attend Oversight meetings at least once a month.

Adjudication

Adjudication is the formal process for dealing with instances of alleged misconduct. Possession of drugs, failing or refusing a drug test or refusing to provide a sample for testing remain the principle charging offences. Both at Rule 32 case reviews and adjudications more attention is paid as to what happened rather than examining the behaviour or events underlying it. The Board feels this is a missed opportunity.

During the year under review the Board has been supplied with a weekly list of scheduled adjudications. Since prisoners may request that a member of the Board is present at their adjudication this is extremely useful as, for monitoring purposes as it enables the identification of “frequent flyers”, (prisoners who offend consistently), charging officers who, on occasion, are accused of “picking on” individuals, and overall patterns and trends in offences.

In order to reduce the number of prisoners being segregated for failing a drug test for the first time there is an option to offer an opportunity to engage in a programme designed to address substance abuse. If the prisoner completes this satisfactorily the charge is subsequently withdrawn.

There continues to be a substantial number of prisoners refusing to be scanned or provide a sample as the prisoner prefers to spend time in cellular confinement or on a Rule 32, rather than be tested and found to have drugs in his system other than his own prescribed medication or receive a positive scan. A finding of this nature leads to medication being withdrawn as a safeguard. Prisoners are advised that it is preferable to record a positive scan or fail a drug test rather than refuse it as it allows for targeted help to be offered to the prisoner. The introduction of the X-ray body scanner has led to a shortage of illicit substances circulating in the prison and has led to an increased diversion of prescribed medication with some accompanying bullying and threatening behaviour.

There have been occasions where awards of cellular confinement have appeared to be particularly harsh given the nature of the offence committed. On investigation the

Board has been informed that the governor was taking into account previous offences but did not make this clear to the prisoner. The Board suggests that governors should explain clearly their rationale in making an award. In addition, where a number of prisoners have been charged with the same offence there have been inconsistencies in the awards that were made.

Prisoners have told Board members that there is no point in them requesting witnesses to be present or asking a governor why a particular decision has been made as the outcome is already decided and will not be reconsidered. It is rare for a prisoner to be given a caution rather than an award and the Board feels that this should be employed more regularly and other forms of punishment, rather than deprivation of privileges, be considered. The majority of prisoners have a negative view of adjudication. Encouraging the prisoner to explain his behaviour and to suggest how he might compensate for it might help to make adjudication more of a learning experience rather than just a means of administering punishment.

Monitoring Observations

- Attention should be given to understanding underlying behaviours and offering advice and help where necessary rather than concentrating on what happened in a particular incident.
- There should be a greater consistency of awards given in adjudications.
- Governors should clearly explain their rationale in making awards to prisoners.
- Prisoners should be encouraged to agree to be scanned or be drug tested rather than refusing to engage.

LIST OF MAGILLIGAN IMB MEMBERS 1 APRIL 2024 - 31 MARCH 2025

Margaret McCrory - Chair

Tanya Quinn – Vice Chair

Anne Rowe

Bryan Snoddy

Arlene Sproule

Ian Hackney